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CURIOUS DECORATION.

JOAQUIN MILLER, the poet of the Sierras, has betaken himself to Washington, where he finds the conditions favorable for a lapse into the semi-civilization of the mining camp. He is letting his hair grow, has exchanged the commonplace suit of sable that he wore hereabout, for his dress of buckskin with fringe on it, and has domiciled himself in a log cabin on the edge of the city, close to a negro quarter. An admirer of his poetry, who recently visited him, says that the door was without a lock and that he walked directly in. Miller was in an arm chair, musing before a fire, but he received his guest graciously and chatted with affability. What strongly interested the guest, after his eyes had grown accustomed to the twilight of the apartment, was the curious aspect of the cabin walls. They were not papered, or painted, or draped, yet there was an effect of unity and tone that was pleasing. Close examination showed that the walls were covered with relics and mementoes, consisting largely of letters, autographic copies of verses, rough drafts of poems, newspaper extracts, and things that one picks up in the course of travel.

There was a poem by Lowell, and near it an invitation to dine with the Duchess of Devonshire. The floor was spread with wolf skins, and the bed hangings were those that were draped about the poet's couch in his *dahabeyah* on the Nile. The simplicity and oddity of the decoration was enhanced by the entrance of a procession of little negroes, who came to the cabin at evening and formed a dado around the wall as they sat motionless, listening to a Bible reading by Joaquin Miller.

COLORS IN DECORATIVE PAINTING.

THE most valuable colors in decorative painting are the ochres, which vary from a bright, though not vivid, yellow, to a color nearly approaching a tawny brown. The best ochre produces quiet tints in white and other colors, including a valuable green when combined with prussian and other blue. In combination with vermilion, indian and venetian red, it produces refined and quiet colors of great value. Most useful reds are light red, indian and venetian red; these may be lightened to any required degree with vermilion. The three reds produce good ground colors when mixed with white, white and yellow ochre, or white and black. Lake and vermilion produce a rich crimson. Of all blue pigments, blue ochre is the most permanent, and prussian blue the most useful. Blue, combined with white, is of the utmost value to prepare permanent greens, and produce pleasant tones. Cobalt blue is highly commended for preparation of clear, bright blues. The finest smalt blue is durable and useful, being unaffected by lime. As a general rule, blues, with a slight greenish tint, are more pleasant in decoration than those which incline to purple. Greens for decoration should, as a rule, be mixed with pigments. The ordinary greens of commerce cannot be depended on. Bright and shining greens should be sparingly introduced, being too hard and forcible, but all tones of suitable green may be found in autumnal foliage. Such greens are readily produced with prussian blue and cobalt blue, and permanent yellow with the ochres, lemon, yellow, and raw and burnt sienna. To compounds of these indian and venetian reds, vandyk brown and burnt umber may be added. All greens may

be brightened with bright and lemon yellow. Lake, vermilion, venetian and indian red are to be valued for the bright intensity of their colors. All colors of a decidedly neutral character prove tame and ineffective. Beads and chamfers, in gold and black, are always appropriate and telling in effect on panels. Lines of light or full colors should be sparingly used on borders, finials and crockets in flat paneling. In the painting of medieval times, it is noticeable that pure colors are rare; these are most generally toned, and with admirable effect. The absence of the primaries is a rebuke to the writers on theory colors, who lay down in a way to indicate the presence of such colors as indispensable to rich decoration, the proportions in which they should appear. The toning of colors is a very simple matter, but it requires system. The adoption of combination changes colors. Where the form of pattern undergoes repetition in stenciled ceiling, bands is the most satisfactory mode, as it helps to remove, in a considerable degree, the unavoidable hardness of such bands, and a quiet effect will be secured by bringing the counterchanged colors close to one another in intensity.

DURABILITY OF COLORS.—Amateurs have frequently occasion to be disappointed at the failure of durability of some of their colors. Some colors are essentially unstable, as hamburg, roman and venetian reds; also violet, carmine and yellow lake, which fade greatly and become brownish, and crimson, lake and carmine, which fade out. But the prime point is to guard against adulteration, and the best security is to deal with houses that have a reputation to sustain.



SKETCH DESIGN FOR TERRA-COTTA MANTEL FRONT, BY V. T. WILSON